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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [KPKO](#) [KV](#) [AF](#) [LH](#)
SUBJECT: NATO KFOR MISSION: LITHUANIA PULLING OUT,
SHIFTING FOCUS TO AFGHANISTAN

REF: A. STATE 26179
[1](#)B. VILNIUS 84

Classified By: Ambassador John A. Cloud for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) Lithuanian Defense Minister Rasa Juknevičienė announced Lithuania's plans to terminate participation in KFOR at the March 24 deployment ceremony for its 20th (and last) KFOR rotation. In comments to the media, Juknevičienė said the decision would allow Lithuania to concentrate on Afghanistan. She did not announce a precise date for the Lithuanian troops to withdraw from KFOR, but estimated that the current deployment would last less than six months.

[1](#)2. (C) Chief of Defense, LTG Valdas Tutkus, told Ambassador March 23 that the decision had already been coordinated with the Ukrainians and Poles. MFA Transatlantic Cooperation and Security Policy Department Director Vytautas Leskevicius told us March 24 that several officers would remain in Kosovo as part of the training mission there, even after the rest of the troops withdrew.

[1](#)3. (C) In a February 5 meeting, Juknevičienė previewed to Ambassador Lithuania's plans to withdraw from Kosovo, explaining that this would allow for additional troops to be sent to its PRT in Ghor province during the summer elections, and might also help fund the expansion of Lithuania's SOF deployment in the south (ref B). Leskevicius was more blunt, saying that pulling out of Kosovo "is the price for increasing in Afghanistan." He confirmed that Lithuania's SOF troops had already increased to 69, and said the extra platoon for Ghor would remain through at least the end of October. In addition, despite a tight budget situation, the GOL has found 20,000 euros to contribute to the ANA Trust Fund.

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